

# Conference Report Highlights

October 8, 1999

## Highlights of the Conference Report to Accompany H.R. 1906 — Agriculture Appropriations, FY 2000

The Majority Leader filed cloture on the Agriculture Appropriations conference report on Thursday, October 7, 1999. Pursuant to a previous unanimous consent agreement, the Senate will resume consideration of the conference report at 4:30 p.m. on Tuesday, October 12, with the cloture vote to occur at 5:30 p.m. The House agreed to the conference report by a vote of 240-175 on October 1, 1999.

The bill provides a total of \$60.3 billion, a large portion of which consists of mandatory spending on food stamps and other nutrition programs. Over \$21 billion goes toward food stamps; almost \$10 billion is allocated for child nutrition programs; and \$4 billion is allotted for the WIC (women, infants and children) Program. An additional \$8.7 billion in emergency appropriations is provided for emergency aid relief to farmers and ranchers. Basic research on agriculture, food safety, and nutrition has been increased by \$80 million. The conference report also includes legislation requiring processors to report the price paid for livestock. The conference report does not include the controversial dairy or trade sanctions provisions.

### Budget Authority

Conference Total:	\$13.988 billion
1999 Level:	\$13.882 billion
2000 Request:	\$14.518 billion

### Key Provisions

- ▶ **\$8.7 billion to Provide Emergency Aid to Farmers (Title VIII)**
- The aid package includes:
  - \$5.54 billion in market loss payments. This equates to a 100-percent increase in a producer's 1999 agricultural market transition (AMTA) payment;
  - \$1.2 billion for crop loss assistance for quality and quantity losses in 1999 crops;
  - \$475 million in direct payments to soybean and minor oilseed producers;
  - \$325 million in assistance to livestock and dairy producers to be administered by the Secretary of Agriculture;
  - \$412 million in assistance to producers of certain specialty crops;
  - The reinstatement of the cotton step-2 export program;
  - The 1999 crop insurance premium discounts of \$400 million for 2000 crops;
  - Increasing the current loan deficiency payment (LDP) payment limit from \$75,000 to \$150,000; and

→Conference Report language encouraging the President to be more aggressive in strengthening trade negotiating authority for American agriculture and expressing Congress' objectives for future agricultural trade negotiations. The language also requests that the President evaluate and make recommendations on the effectiveness of our existing export and food aid programs.

► **Agricultural Programs: \$20.1 billion**

- Agricultural Research Service is increased by \$45 million from the FY99 level to a level of \$886.6 million.
- Cooperative State Research, Education & Extension Service is increased by \$31 million from the FY99 level to \$950.2 million.
- Farm Service Agency salaries and expenses are increased by \$80.3 million from the FY99 level (excluding supplementals for FY99) to continue delivery of the farm ownership, farm operating, and disaster loan programs. Total funding is \$794.8 million (same as President's request).
- Animal Plant Health Inspection Service is funded at \$446.5 million (\$13 million over FY99).
- Agricultural Marketing Service is funded at \$65.3 million (\$4 million over last fiscal year).
- Total loan authorization levels for agricultural credit for agricultural programs are increased by \$798.4 million over the last fiscal year. Total loan authorization funding is \$3.1 billion, which is \$74.6 million above the President's request.
- Federal Crop Insurance Corporation is funded at \$997 million.
- Commodity Credit Corporation is funded at \$15.4 billion for net realized losses, a \$5.4 billion increase over last year's level.

► **Conservation Programs: \$813.3 million**

- Funding for the Natural Resources Conservation Service includes \$681.2 million for operations (\$20 million over the request), \$10.4 million for watershed surveys and planning, \$99.4 million for watershed and flood prevention operations, \$35 million for resource conservation and development, and \$6.3 million for the Forestry Incentives Program.

► **Rural Development Programs: \$2.2 billion**

- Funding is provided to support a total loan authorization level for rural housing programs of \$4.6 billion, which is \$338 million above last fiscal year and \$14 million above the request.
- Rural Utilities Service electric and telecommunications loans are increased to a funding level of \$2.6 billion, \$1.05 billion above last fiscal year and \$1.54 billion above the request.

- Rural assistance programs are restored to the FY99 level of \$640 million, an increase of \$200 million over the request.
- The Distance Learning and Telemedicine Program loan authorization is increased by \$50 million over last fiscal year, bringing the FY00 loan level to \$200 million (same as the request).
- ▶ **Domestic Food and Nutrition Programs: \$35.04 billion**
- The Child Nutrition Programs are funded at \$9.55 billion, an increase of \$377 million over FY99 and \$11 million below the President's request.
- The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) is funded at \$4.03 billion, an increase of \$108 million over FY99 and \$73 million below the President's request.
- Food Stamps (mandatory) are funded at \$21.07 billion.
- The Commodity Assistance Program is funded at \$133 million.
- ▶ **Foreign Assistance: \$1.06 billion**
- The Public Law 480 Program is appropriated \$950.7 million, for a total program level of \$976 million.
- ▶ **Food and Drug Administration (FDA): \$1.1 billion total program level**
- The conference agreement provides \$1.04 billion for salaries and expenses of the FDA, \$69.8 million above last fiscal year. FDA is directed to submit a report within 180 days on the effects of reducing illegal tobacco sales to minors and the effect on compliance.
- ▶ **Food Safety**
- The Food Safety Inspection Service is increased by \$32 million over FY99, for a total of \$649 million, almost the same as the President's request. Conferees provide \$30 million of this increase for the Food Safety Initiative.

#### **Legislative Provisions:**

- Title IX of the bill includes legislation to require mandatory livestock price reporting by certain meat packers which will provide information regarding the marketing of cattle, swine, lamb, and livestock products that can be easily understood by producers and packers, and that will encourage competition (S. 1672 reported by the Agriculture Committee on September 30, 1999).

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